

# A Grocery Store 10 Years in the Making

*"The store has been a convenient place for all age groups to purchase food... we get new customers in the store every day."*

Amani Gazzali,  
Gazzali's Grocery store

## PROBLEM

Residents of East Oakland did not have a grocery store in their neighborhood for almost a decade, which made it difficult to buy and eat affordable, quality fresh fruits and vegetables.

## SOLUTION

A partnership was formed to bring a new grocery store into the community.

## PARTNERS

- The Gazzali Family
- East Oakland Diabetes Work Group, Alameda County Health Department
- African American 5 a Day Campaign at East Oakland Faith Deliverance Center

## STEPS TOWARD CHANGE

The East Oakland Diabetes Work Group brought together community members and leaders to educate them about the health issues impacting East Oakland residents. The Work Group painted a grim picture about the health of the community. They talked about the high rates of chronic diseases; the large number of fast food restaurants; difficulties in encouraging residents to eat healthier when the community lacked places to buy healthy food; and city regulations that prevented the Gazzali family, a locally-owned grocery business, from obtaining licenses and permits to set up a grocery store in the area.

The Gazzali family joined forces with the Work Group to identify partners such as a city council member, county supervisor, and faith leaders who could aid in the process of bringing a grocery store to East Oakland. The partners worked together to secure the licenses, permits, and community buy-in for the store.

As part of the process, the Work Group gathered community input through surveys that showed residents' support for a neighborhood grocery store. The surveys addressed factors such as community health needs and consumer preferences for convenience, product variety, and competitive pricing. These factors were included to ensure that the store met the needs of the community members and had the best chance of being successful.

In 2004, the Gazzali family opened their new store in East Oakland—Gazzali's Supermarket. At the grand opening, they pledged to provide the community with quality, abundant, and affordable fresh fruits and vegetables all year round. The store is located in a convenient location and offers an even larger produce department than was originally planned. Food demonstrations that feature a variety of fruits and vegetables are conducted in the store. They have also placed signs throughout the store to educate customers about how to select, store, and prepare fruits and vegetables. The Gazzali family has done an excellent job at promoting healthy food choices to its customers and has built a loyal customer base over time.

For more information, visit [www.ca5aday.com](http://www.ca5aday.com) or contact Shené Bowie, African American 5 a Day Campaign, at [sbowie@dhs.ca.gov](mailto:sbowie@dhs.ca.gov).

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